



February 24, 2011

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Appropriations Committee

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H.B. No. 6380 AN ACT CONCERNING THE BUDGET FOR THE
BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2013

GOVERNOR'S BILL 1002: AN ACT TRANSFERRING THE OFFICE OF
WORKFORCE COMPETITIVENESS AND COMMISSION ON
CULTURE AND TOURISM TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC
AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER CHANGES TO
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STATUTES.

**Testimony of Helen Higgins, Executive Director, Connecticut Trust for
Historic Preservation**

My name is Helen Higgins, and I am Executive Director of the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. The Trust is Connecticut's non-profit statewide preservation organization, established by Special Act of the Connecticut General Assembly in 1975 (SA 93-75). It is committed to protecting and nourishing the vitality of significant buildings and landscapes through grants, loans, on-site technical preservation assistance, educational programs and publications.

I want to testify on three parts of the Governor's budget proposal:

HB 6380:

1- Section 1, T353 – Allocation of \$210,396 to the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation. I am fully in favor of retaining level funding for the Connecticut Trust. This money is directly re-granted to communities across the state through our Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants program. Attached is a run down of the impact of these grants on our state's economy since they were first started as collaboration with the Connecticut Humanities Council.

2- Section 1, T362 – Allocation of \$1,657,633 to the Connecticut Humanities Council. I favor a revision of this line item for the Humanities Council to be fully funded, as were all the other line items under the Commission on Culture and Tourism. The Connecticut Humanities Council has been the leader in Connecticut in bringing the great history of our state alive through our many historic museums, sites and house museums. As Governor Malloy stated so eloquently at the Freedom Trail website launch here at the State Capitol last week, Connecticut's history needs to be told, now more than ever. Connecticut is the place where national stories took place, whether key events during the Revolution or events during the fight for Women's Rights. The centrality of Connecticut's history to our nation's history needs to be told. He said by telling our great history we build the pride of our residents in our state, in our communities while attracting tourists to our many historic places. No other agency works more effectively to bring history alive across the state than the Connecticut Humanities Council.

HB 1002 An Act Transferring the Office of Workforce Competitiveness and Commission on Culture and Tourism to the Department of Economic and Community Development.

While I believe that things that work shouldn't be changed, I fully understand the motivation to merge the Commission of Culture and Tourism into the Department of Economic and Community Development. The Commission on Culture and Tourism houses the State Historic Preservation Office. What is more relevant to economic and community development than investment in historic places, whether in rehabbing downtown retail buildings or transforming older urban housing stock into affordable housing? As the current bill reads, the merger holds the commission harmless – it appears to move it intact, with all its authorities, especially in the State Historic Preservation Office. In order to avoid a conflict of interest with the new agency, the authority of the State Historic Preservation Officer needs to be clarified as final on all historic impact reviews of economic development projects as required in federal and state law. With that addition in language, I support the proposed merger.



Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation Results Based Accountability

Input: From 2003 through 2010 over \$2.65 million in state funds have been re-granted through four Connecticut Trust funding vehicles:

- **Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants (HPTAG)**
- **Historic Building Financing Fund for affordable housing projects**
- **Barns Grant**
- **Community Cultural Planning Grants**

Indicators:

- Local jobs have been created
- Private investment has been stimulated
- Historic places have been preserved and used
- Community interest in preservation is increasing

Outcomes:

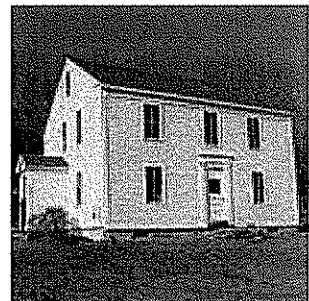
- Historic preservation activity results in economic growth in CT, through job creation and private investment
 - Local Jobs – 1076
 - Private/other investment: \$8.6 million
- Historic places that are preserved and used enhance community character
 - 321 preservation planning, barns restoration and affordable housing restoration grants to 91 towns and cities between 2003 and the end of 2010
 - 85% of planning/pre-development grants from 2007-2008 have resulted in actual restoration/construction projects. (40 pre-development grants/34 in construction or completed)
- Community Interest in Preservation is increasing: Examples from across the state:



In New Britain, we have long recognized and taken great pride in the historic assets that grace our downtown and its surrounding neighborhoods. We are grateful for the CT Trust assistance, especially the Community Cultural Planning Grant that gave us the opportunity to finally begin the process necessary to ensure that these resources are preserved for future generations.

—Steven P. Schiller, AICP, City Planner, New Britain

Eastford's town-owned 1806 Union Society of Phoenixville House was to be demolished in 2005 to make way for an addition to the town hall. But, Connecticut Trust's field staff and its Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants have led to the building being saved. Currently it is being restored for the town to use as a public meeting space. This is one of only two Union Society buildings in Connecticut, and is a place where, for 150 years, every-one



was welcome to attend activities, regardless of ethnic origin, spiritual belief, or gender.
Carol Davidge, Eastford

The CT Trust and its grants have been invaluable to historic preservation efforts in Westport...from evaluating a historic barn, to assistance with grant funding application for a preservation plan for a State Archaeological Preserve, to advice on any number of other issues. Trust staff are a simple phone call away and their expertise is essential to our work.

—Maggie Feczko, Chairman, Westport Historic District Commission



The CT Trust's field staff and Historic Preservation Technical Assistance Grants have been a tremendously valuable resource to the Hazardville Institute Conservancy Society. As a group of mainly non-professional volunteers, they have helped guide us to determine the logical step-by-step process of restoring our building for municipal and private use. In 2002 we received a \$500 mini-grant from the Trust which allowed us to have a Hazardous Materials Testing/Study performed. This was a critical first step in our journey. In August 2010, through the Trust's assistance and guidance and a grant, we completed a full development plan to update and restructure our goals. The process of conducting the study forced our group to evaluate our goals, develop a mission statement, formulate an adaptive re-use and restoration plan and have a financial analysis done. The grant gave us the opportunity to work with design and construction professionals and essentially map out a blue print to complete the initial phase of our mission: restoration of the Hazardville Institute building. We are now ready to apply for a Restoration Fund grant from the Commission on Culture and Tourism.

—Gretchen Pfeifer-Hall, Chairman, Hazardville Institute Conservancy Society, Enfield



The CT Trust's Community Cultural Planning Grant allowed us to actively engage our community and bring their ideas together with proven results from other cities to come up with a road map for taking our revitalization efforts to the next level. Ideas generated included proposals to better utilize our historic waterfront, restore two-way traffic to many downtown streets, and reconfigure urban renewal-era street and parking areas to integrate the adjacent area of historic residences into the renewal happening in downtown.

—Harry A. Smith, AICP, City Planner, New London

Connecticut Trust Partners

- Connecticut Commission on Culture & Tourism
- Connecticut Humanities Council
- Connecticut Housing Finance Authority
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Connecticut League of History Organizations
- Local preservation organizations/historical societies
- Connecticut Main St Center
- Municipalities
- Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, Connecticut Housing Coalition, Working lands Alliance, Connecticut Farmland Trust

